Gender Equity

Policy and Guidelines for Implementation

A Summary

Saskatchewan Education
February 1991

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This pamphlet contains a summary of Saskatchewan Education's **Gender Equity Policy and Guidelines for Implementation**. The complete version of the **Policy and Guidelines** contains policy statements in which Saskatchewan Education makes a commitment to gender equity and encourages schools and school divisions to incorporate gender equity into all aspects of their educational programs. The document also includes an action plan describing specific activities which can be undertaken by Saskatchewan Education, school divisions and schools to implement gender equity.

The **Gender Equity Policy and Guidelines for Implementation** was developed in collaboration with the educational partners. A Gender Equity Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from Saskatchewan's major educational organizations, provided direction during the development of the policy. Draft versions of the policy were circulated widely to people in the field of education. Their comments and suggestions are reflected in the final draft.

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What is Gender Equity?

Gender equity is defined as: the provision of equality of opportunity and the realization of equality of results for all students based on individual aptitudes, abilities and interests, regardless of gender.

Why Gender Equity?

Saskatchewan Education's **Gender Equity Policy and Guidelines for Implementation** grew out of a recognition that gender bias is detrimental for students, for communities and for society as a whole. It limits individuals' personal growth and career opportunities, and restricts the social and economic contributions of people of both genders.

Some reasons for making achievement of gender equity an objective of Saskatchewan's educational system are:

- To further the basic Goals of Education in Saskatchewan which are intended to develop the potential of each person to the fullest extent.
- To provide basic human rights to all students. Both the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code prohibit discrimination in education and employment on the basis of gender.
- To provide an example of fairness and justice to students and to the community, because students learn by observing the world around them as well as through direct instruction.
- To promote the economic and social development of Saskatchewan and of Canada by ensuring that all individuals are equipped to contribute to the maximum of their ability.

Saskatchewan's educational system has recently developed a new Core Curriculum. Implementing gender equity at the same time as Core Curriculum will mean that gender equity becomes a part of the overall curriculum plan and of individual courses of study.

Basic Principles of Gender Equity

The principles which follow are fundamental to achieving gender equity. They provide a basis for planning and action by teachers, schools, school divisions, educational organizations and communities.

- Students have a right to a learning environment that is gender-equitable.
- Students, in consultation with their families, have a right to make individual decisions about the roles, programs of study and careers that are appropriate for them. The school can help students choose by making them aware of the many, varied options available.
- Attitudes and behaviours which contribute to gender equity are learned and therefore can be taught to both students and teachers.
- Female and male students have had different experiences in school and in society and thus may have different ways of learning. In a gender-equitable educational system, all ways of learning are respected equally.
- Achieving gender equity will require the examination of all aspects of the school environment and may necessitate change in many of them.
- Language influences the way in which people understand and interpret the world around them. Therefore, language which includes both genders and gives them equal status is important to achieving gender equity.
- To a large extent, teachers structure what happens in classrooms. Therefore, it is vitally important that they have the skills and attitudes necessary to create gender-equitable classrooms.
- Because students observe and imitate the behaviour of others, role-models are very important. Teachers, administrators and other school staff are very powerful role-models.
- Achieving gender equity is an ongoing task that will require effort and energy over the years.
- Achieving gender equity will require cooperation between students, teachers, educational organizations and communities.

Gender Equity Policy

The intent of the Goals of Education in Saskatchewan is "to develop the potential of each person to the fullest extent". In recognition of this, Saskatchewan Education encourages the achievement of gender equity within the province's Kindergarten to Grade 12 system. Gender equity will be promoted as an integral part of all aspects of the educational system including: curriculum, resource materials, instructional and assessment practices, school environment, student development, the relationship between the school and the community, and monitoring.

Curriculum

The curriculum is the formal program of studies taught in the school.

Curricula which make it clear that both genders are of equal value and importance in today's world:

- include information on the contributions that both genders have made to society
- are written from viewpoints which include both genders
- feature both genders in the examples offered

Policy

All curricula developed by Saskatchewan Education shall be gender-equitable. Assisting students to be aware of gender bias is one of Saskatchewan Education's curriculum objectives. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions that prepare locally developed courses and alternative education programs to ensure that these curricula are gender-equitable and to also make awareness of gender bias a curriculum objective.

Resource Materials

Resource materials are the books, videos, filmstrips, computer software, assessment instruments, and other materials used during instruction as well as the materials in the school resource centre.

Gender-equitable resource materials:

- are written in language which includes both genders
- present the experiences and viewpoints of both genders
- show males and females as having a wide range of abilities, personality characteristics and emotions
- show both genders as being equal; neither is consistently subservient nor dominant
- show benefits and privileges being assigned on the basis of ability and individual preference, rather than gender

Policy

Saskatchewan Education considers fair and equitable treatment of the genders to be an important criterion when evaluating resource materials and recommending them for use in the schools. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to also consider fair and equitable treatment of the genders as an important criterion when selecting classroom and library materials, and to design instruction so that students develop the ability to recognize bias in the materials they read, view and hear.

Instructional and Assessment Practices

Instructional practices are the interactions that take place between teachers and students, the strategies that teachers use when teaching the various subjects, and the assessment techniques that teachers use to evaluate student progress.

Instructional and assessment practices which offer equal opportunity to both genders:

- give all students equal amounts and types of teacher attention, praise and encouragement
- use the same criteria when evaluating female and male students
- create an expectation that both male and female students will do their best in all subject areas

Policy

Saskatchewan Education shall provide leadership to schools and school divisions in promoting development and use of gender-equitable instructional and assessment practices. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to ensure that all instructional and assessment practices are based on students' individual aptitudes, abilities, interests, and needs, not on their gender.

School Environment

School environment refers both to the school's physical environment and to the atmosphere or feeling which gives each school (and school system) its unique character.

A gender-equitable school environment:

- makes it clear that both genders have equal ability and potential
- treats students and staff of both genders with the same dignity and respect

Policy

Saskatchewan Education endeavors to create a gender-equitable environment at all levels of the Department. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to ensure that school environments are gender-equitable and that students and school staff of both genders are given a wide range of opportunities and treated with the same dignity and respect.

Student Development

Student development includes career education, personal counselling, and education programs which relate to personal growth and to functioning effectively in the home, the family and the community.

Student development programs which are gender-equitable:

- make all students aware of a wide variety of career options
- assist both genders to develop self-confidence, to relate well to others and to develop decision-making skills

Policy

Saskatchewan Education shall provide leadership to schools and school divisions in the development of gender-equitable student development programs. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to ensure that student development programs (including career education programs) provide both genders with the knowledge, skills and values they need to live successfully in the years ahead.

The School and the Community

The school is an important part of the community. It interacts with parents, the media and the general public. Schools can make gender equity a part of their relationship with the community by:

- ensuring that all interactions with the community are gender-equitable
- involving the community in planning and implementing gender equity programs
- providing leadership to the rest of the community regarding this very important issue

Policy

Saskatchewan Education shall ensure that its interactions with parents, the media and the general public are gender-equitable. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to ensure that contacts with their communities are gender-equitable and to involve their communities in planning for gender equity.

Monitoring

Monitoring refers to the education system's ability to determine the extent to which progress has been made toward achieving gender equity. Monitoring includes:

- establishing goals and periodically measuring the progress made toward achieving those goals
- re-evaluating goals as social and economic change occurs and technology progresses

Schools and school divisions that include plans for monitoring in their gender equity programs will be able to identify both their successes and those areas that need continuing work.

Policy

Saskatchewan Education shall monitor its own progress toward gender equity goals and provide leadership and assistance to schools and school divisions in the monitoring of progress toward their goals. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to develop systematic assessment processes to determine whether gender equity goals have been met.

For More Information

A copy of the complete **Gender Equity Policy and Guidelines for Implementation** has been distributed to every school in the province. To read the full policy or to discuss what gender equity means for your school or your community contact your local school principal.

Gender Equity

Policy and Guidelines for Implementation

Saskatchewan Education
February 1991

Acknowledgements

Saskatchewan Education would like to thank the members of the Gender Equity Advisory Committee for their direction and guidance during the development of this policy and these guidelines for implementation.

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Rationale

This Gender Equity Policy grew out of a need to ensure that opportunities are equal for female and male students in the schools of Saskatchewan. Presently, this is not the case. The research (summarized in Appendix A of this document) clearly shows that schools do not provide a gender-equitable environment. Gender bias in the schools is not due to the actions of any particular individual or group, rather it is built into the very framework of the educational system. In this way, the educational system is simply a reflection of the larger society in which we live. The result of systemic bias is detrimental for individual students, for communities and for society as a whole.

There are four basic reasons for making the achievement of gender equity an objective of Saskatchewan's educational system. These reasons are:

- To further the basic Goal of Education in Saskatchewan, which was defined by the Curriculum and Instruction Review Committee as, "to develop the potential of each person to the fullest extent." (Directions: The Final Report, 1984, p. 26)

- To provide basic human rights to all students and to eliminate discrimination against groups of people based on stereotypes. Both the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code prohibit discrimination in education and employment on the basis of gender.

- To provide an example of fairness and justice to students and to the community, because students learn by observing the world around them as well as through direct instruction.

- To promote the economic and social development of Saskatchewan and of Canada by ensuring that all individuals are equipped to contribute to the maximum of their ability.

Making gender equity a priority at this time is particularly appropriate because it coincides with Core Curriculum development. Implementing the two simultaneously will ensure that gender equity becomes an integral part of the overall curriculum plan and of individual courses of study. It should be reflected in all components of the education system: curriculum, resource materials, instructional and assessment practices, school environment, student development programs, and interactions between the school and the community.

Definition

Gender equity is defined as: the provision of equality of opportunity and the realization of equality of results for all students based on individual aptitudes, abilities and interests, regardless of gender.

Gender Equity Policy

The intent of the Goals of Education in Saskatchewan is "to develop the potential of each person to the fullest extent". In recognition of this, Saskatchewan Education encourages the achievement of gender equity within the province's Kindergarten to Grade 12 system. Gender equity will be promoted as an integral part of all aspects of the educational system including: curriculum, resource materials, instructional and assessment practices, school environment, student development, the relationship between the school and the community, and monitoring.

Curriculum

All curricula developed by Saskatchewan Education shall be gender-equitable. Assisting students to be aware of gender bias is one of Saskatchewan Education's curriculum objectives. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions that prepare locally developed courses and alternative education programs to ensure that these curricula are gender-equitable and to also make awareness of gender bias a curriculum objective.

Resource Materials

Saskatchewan Education considers fair and equitable treatment of the genders to be an important criterion when evaluating resource materials and recommending them for use in the schools. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to also consider fair and equitable treatment of the genders as an important criterion when selecting classroom and library materials, and to design instruction so that students develop the ability to recognize bias in the materials they read, view and hear.

Instructional and Assessment Practices

Saskatchewan Education shall provide leadership to schools and school divisions in promoting development and use of gender-equitable instructional and assessment practices. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to ensure that all instructional and assessment practices are based on students' individual aptitudes, abilities, interests, and needs, not on their gender.

School Environment

Saskatchewan Education endeavors to create a gender-equitable environment at all levels of the Department. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to ensure that school environments are gender-equitable and that students and school staff of both genders are given a wide range of opportunities and treated with the same dignity and respect.

Student Development

Saskatchewan Education shall provide leadership to schools and school divisions in the development of gender-equitable student development programs. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to ensure that student development programs (including career education programs) provide both genders with the knowledge, skills and values they need to live successfully in the years ahead.

The School and the Community

Saskatchewan Education shall ensure that its interactions with parents, the media and the general public are gender-equitable. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to also ensure that contacts with their communities are gender equitable and to involve their communities in planning for gender equity.

Monitoring

Saskatchewan Education shall monitor its own progress toward gender equity goals and provide leadership and assistance to schools and school divisions in the monitoring of progress toward their goals. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to develop systematic assessment processes to determine whether gender equity goals have been met.

Basic Principles of Gender Equity

The principles presented below are fundamental to achieving gender equity. They provide the basis for this policy and for the guidelines for implementation outlined later in the policy.

- Students have a right to a learning environment that is gender-equitable.
- Students, in consultation with their families, have a right to make individual decisions about the roles, programs of study and careers that are appropriate for them. The school can facilitate this decision-making process by making students aware of the many, varied options available.
- Attitudes and behaviours which contribute to gender equity are learned and therefore can be taught to both students and teachers.
- Individuals have different ways of acquiring, organizing and interpreting information; and different ways of interacting with and reacting to their environment—different "ways of knowing." The ways in which males and females know the world may differ because of their different socialization. All ways of knowing are respected equally in a gender-equitable educational system.
- Achieving gender equity will require the examination of all aspects of the school environment and may necessitate change in many of them.
- Language influences the way in which individuals understand and interpret the world around them. Therefore, language which includes both genders and give them equal status—inclusionary language—is important to achieving gender equity.
- Teachers structure students' learning experiences and shape the classroom environment. Therefore, it is vitally important that they have the skills and attitudes necessary to create gender-equitable classrooms.
- Because students observe and imitate the behaviour of others, role-models are very important. Teachers, administrators and other school staff are very powerful role-models.
- Achieving gender equity is an ongoing task that will require effort and energy over the years.
- A gender-equitable school environment is best achieved by working with parents and the larger community.
- Achieving gender equity will require collaborative and conscious leadership by all of the partners in education.

Gender Equity and the Curriculum

Core Curriculum grew out of the Curriculum and Instruction Review process, the same process which identified recognition of the inherent worth and value of each individual as the foundation upon which the Goals of Education for Saskatchewan are based (Directions: The Final Report, 1984).

The Goals of Education provide the basis for an educational system which can adapt to today's rapidly changing society. They identify some of the knowledge, skills and values which students need in order to influence change in a positive manner.

Core Curriculum is the means by which teachers can achieve the Goals of Education in their classrooms. Core Curriculum has four specific components:

- Required Areas of Study
- Common Essential Learnings
- Locally-Determined Options
- The Adaptive Dimension

The relationship of each of these components to gender equity is discussed in the sections which follow.

The Required Areas of Study

The Required Areas of Study are the vehicles through which students learn specific content and the skills associated with that content.

Gender equity means that both genders will have equal opportunities to achieve the same level of knowledge and skill in each of the Required Areas of Study. It means that all students, regardless of their gender, will be offered encouragement and support appropriate to their individual needs.

The Common Essential Learnings

The Common Essential Learnings (C.E.L.s) permeate all Required Areas of Study and all other school courses. They are intended to direct content and instruction in ways that will provide students with an integrated and meaningful knowledge base, as well as with the understandings and processes necessary to achieve personal autonomy and compassion for others.

There is a strong link between gender equity and the integration of the Common Essential Learnings into the curriculum.

The purpose of **Communication** is to promote students' learning in all school subjects by improving their language abilities within each subject. Communication ability is important for both genders so that they will have equal opportunity to learn and develop in the subject areas. It is also important that students learn to use inclusionary language (language which includes both genders and gives them equal status) in all of their speaking and writing.

Numeracy emphasizes opportunities for all students to apply mathematical abilities and knowledge in real life situations. Developing citizens who can cope confidently and competently with mathematics concepts in the workplace and in their personal life demands that both females and males be provided with the same challenges and opportunities for individual success.

Technological Literacy promotes the abilities that both genders need in order to understand and influence the interaction between society and technology, and to make informed decisions about technology.

Personal and Social Values and Skills has as its objective the development in students of a sound moral character, a sense of community, and competence in responding to the personal, social and cultural aspects of life. This objective can be promoted by creating a school environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity as well as through direct instruction. Gender equity is an essential part of such an environment.

One of the objectives of this C.E.L. is to promote understanding of discrimination, bias, racism, sexism and all forms of inequality and a desire to contribute to their elimination. Gender bias contributes to inequality and, thus, is one of the forces in society to which this C.E.L. is directed.

Critical and Creative Thinking encourages all students to take into account the needs, viewpoints and arguments of others when seeking out the most accurate and fair positions regardless or in spite of their own particular interests or desires. This C.E.L. encourages students to examine situations critically, to recognize inequalities based on gender (or on any other personal characteristic) and to develop creative and constructive ways of rectifying these situations.

Finally, an important part of **Independent Learning** relates to encouraging assertiveness and independence of spirit in students so that they will be able to take responsibility for their own learning. When both genders are given every opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to be independent learners, then educators can feel satisfaction in a job well done.

Locally-Determined Options

Locally-Determined Options are intended to provide time for local or community program priorities. These options can be provided through the selection of provincially developed courses or through courses developed at the local level. The principles of gender equity apply to courses chosen or developed at the local level just as they do to all other courses. Such courses reflect the interests and experiences of both genders and so are attractive to students of both genders. As is the case with the Required Areas of Study, encouragement to achieve is offered to students on the basis of their interest and aptitude, not their gender.

The Adaptive Dimension

The Adaptive Dimension provides flexibility within the school program so that teachers and schools can make adaptations to meet students' individual needs. Gender-equitable individualized programs develop each student's unique abilities. No limits are placed on intellectual, artistic, physical or social development because of a student's gender.

Other Elements of Core Curriculum

Other elements of Core Curriculum affect all four of these basic components.

- Alternative Education provides programs for those students who require an education that is qualitatively different from that of the regular program. Goals, objectives, content, setting, materials and equipment might all be modified in order to maximize learning opportunities for students who cannot achieve their potential in the regular program.

- Student Services include distribution of career-related information, student counselling, consultation with parents and other professionals, community liaison, and academic and personal assessment.

- Indian and Metis content in curricula help all students understand and appreciate historical and contemporary Aboriginal cultures.

- Resource-based learning is a broad approach to instruction, in which children are actively and meaningfully engaged in the use of print, non-print and human resources. The emphasis is on building students' ability to locate, process and analyze information.

Everything which has been said previously about gender equity and curriculum applies equally to these areas. It is important that gender equity be an integral part of every contact between students and the educational system.

Guidelines for Implementation

Examining the total experience of the child in the school environment is essential to achieving gender equity. Everything that happens in the school has an impact on students. Every activity, every interaction, every word spoken helps shape children's views of themselves and of the world around them.

In the sections which follow, gender equity is discussed in relation to six aspects of the educational program. These aspects are:

- curriculum
- resource materials
- instructional and assessment practices
- school environment
- student development
- the school and the community

Although six aspects have been identified, the distinction between them is artificial. There is overlap between them and all are interrelated. A seventh section on monitoring provides guidance for program evaluation as progress is made toward achieving gender equity in all areas of the education system.

Saskatchewan Education, school divisions and schools all have roles to play in the implementation of gender equity. These roles will be facilitated by the development of formal written policies which state a commitment to the principles of gender equity and address the ways in which gender equity can be integrated into all areas of the educational program. It is appropriate that school divisions and schools develop formal policies relating to gender equity. Formal written school and school division policies:

- affirm the school's/school division's commitment to gender equity
- provide directions for action
- present a strong message to teachers, parents and students about the importance of gender equity

This policy represents Saskatchewan Education's commitment to gender equity. In addition, the Department has a number of internal policies and guidelines which deal with this issue.

Saskatchewan's teacher education programs have an important role to play in the implementation of gender equity. The education students of today are the teachers of tomorrow. If these students enter the profession with a knowledge of gender equity issues and the skills to create gender-equitable classrooms, then gender-equity is that much closer to becoming a reality. Therefore, it is important that gender equity be addressed by the teacher education programs both in course content and through example.

In the seven sections which follow, activities which can be undertaken by the three levels of the educational system are suggested. The activities are listed in separate columns for easy identification. Schools and school divisions can choose from among the suggestions provided to develop their own action plans. Some may choose to develop sequential plans in which gender equity is gradually introduced into the educational program over a period of years. Others may choose a holistic approach in which gender equity is introduced into all aspects of the educational program at once.

Curriculum

The curriculum is the formal program of studies taught in the school. Most curricula are designed by Saskatchewan Education in consultation with the other partners in education. Curricula for locally developed courses and alternative education programs are designed by local school divisions and/or schools.

Curricula reveal much about what society considers important. The content which is included (and that which is excluded), the specific examples selected for study and the perspective from which information is presented give messages about society's values.

Curricula which make it clear that both genders are of equal value and importance in today's world:

- include information on the contributions that both genders have made to society
- are written from viewpoints which include both genders
- feature both genders in the examples provided

Policy

All curricula developed by Saskatchewan Education shall be gender-equitable. Assisting students to be aware of gender bias is one of Saskatchewan Education's curriculum objectives. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions that prepare locally developed courses and alternative education programs to ensure that these curricula are gender-equitable and to also make awareness of gender bias a curriculum objective.

Saskatchewan Education	School Division	School
• Provide guidelines which schools and school divisions can follow to ensure that locally developed courses and alternative education programs are gender-equitable.	• Develop policy regarding gender equity in locally developed courses and alternative education programs.	• Ensure that locally developed courses and alternative education programs are gender-equitable. • Promote discussion of school division gender equity policy among school staff.
• Ensure that inclusionary language is used in all new curricula. • Ensure that the contributions made by males and females to society are recognized in curricula. • Include examples from males' and females' experience in curriculum content. • Make awareness of gender biases a curriculum objective. • Ensure that teaching strategies suggested in curricula are gender-equitable. • Provide inservice on gender equity for curriculum developers.	• Develop policy regarding use of inclusionary language in courses developed at the local level and alternative education programs.	• Encourage and promote the use of inclusionary language in all school situations. • Provide teachers with information concerning gender equity issues in the curriculum. • Include provisions for gender equity in lesson plans.
• Ensure that inservice provided by Saskatchewan Education includes information on presenting subject area content in gender-equitable fashion. • When developing all courses, assume that students of both genders will be enrolled and design the courses appropriately.	• Ensure that inservice on all subject areas includes information on presenting the subject in gender-equitable fashion. • Provide equal access for students of both genders to all courses offered by schools.	• Ensure that inservice on all subject areas includes information on presenting the subject in gender-equitable fashion. • Make provision for students of both genders to have equal access to all courses.

Resource Materials

Resource materials are the books, videos, filmstrips, computer software, norm and criterion referenced assessment instruments, and other materials used during instruction as well as the materials included in the school resource centre collection.

Students use a variety of resource materials as part of their learning experiences. From the materials they use, children learn not only factual information but also attitudes and values about the roles that women and men are expected to play in society. Therefore, it is crucial that these materials reflect gender equity.

Some materials contain an inherent gender bias. When this type of bias exists, drawing it to students' attention and discussing it will help students understand it within an historical and/or cultural context.

Policy

Saskatchewan Education considers fair and equitable treatment of the genders to be an important criterion when evaluating resource materials and recommending them for use in the schools. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to also consider fair and equitable treatment of the genders as an important criterion when selecting classroom and library materials, and to design instruction so that students develop the ability to recognize bias in the materials they read, view and hear.

Saskatchewan Education	School Division	School
• Develop criteria to be used by Saskatchewan Education personnel when evaluating print and non-print materials for authorization or recommendation.	• Include a statement in the division's policy on selection of materials which recognizes absence of gender bias as one criterion in selection.	• Ensure that selection of resource materials is done by qualified teachers who are aware of the importance of gender equity.
• Make Saskatchewan Education's policy and expectations regarding gender bias clear to publishers.		
• Provide inservice on gender equity in resource materials for curriculum developers.	• Provide inservice on identification of gender-equitable materials.	• Ensure that gender equity is addressed during staff development sessions on selection of materials.
• Acquire, through Saskatchewan Education's Resource Centre, materials on gender equity for use by curriculum developers.		
• Develop guidelines and policy that can be used by schools to identify gender bias in resource materials.	• Evaluate for gender bias resource materials considered for classroom or division resource centre use.	• Evaluate for gender bias materials considered for classroom or school resource centre use.
• In curriculum documents, provide suggestions for teaching students to recognize gender bias in resource materials.		• Teach students how to evaluate materials for gender bias.

Instructional and Assessment Practices

Instructional practices are the interactions that take place between teachers and students, the approaches and techniques which are used to teach the subject content and processes, and the assessment strategies used to collect evidence of student progress.

Instructional practices bring the curriculum to life. Specific teaching techniques, classroom organization and management, individualization, assessment strategies, and the structuring of groups and assignments are some aspects of instructional practice. During these routine activities, there are many ways in which teachers can deliver verbal and non-verbal messages to students. Some examples include the use of praise, punishment and eye contact; the amount and type of attention given to students; and the expectations that teachers hold for their students. Each of these messages tells students something about their place in the world. Each message treats students equitably or inequitably. When the messages that students receive from their teachers are equitable, they are able to learn and grow without facing artificial barriers or restrictions.

Equitable treatment of students doesn't reduce or eliminate the need to make provision for individual differences. Rather, it enhances the concept of individualization because it means that all decisions about students are based on their personal aptitudes, abilities and interests, rather than on their gender.

Policy

Saskatchewan Education shall provide leadership to schools and school divisions in promoting development and use of gender-equitable instructional and assessment practices. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to ensure that all instructional and assessment practices are based on students' individual aptitudes, abilities, interests, and needs, not on their gender.

Saskatchewan Education	School Division	School
• Identify resources which provide advice on gender-equitable instructional and assessment practices.	• Provide inservice on gender-equitable instructional and assessment practices as part of the staff development program. • Create an awareness in administrators of the need to be conscious of gender equity during the teacher supervision process.	• Make gender-equitable instructional and assessment strategies an integral part of the staff development program. • Have similar expectations for both genders in regard to: -courtesy -attitude -participation -standards of dress. • Rotate all school and classroom jobs rather than assigning them on the basis of gender. • Assign students to mixed gender groups for school and classroom activities. • Ensure that all assessment practices are free of gender bias. • Have similar expectations regarding achievement for both genders.

- Avoid promoting competition between male and female students.

- Over the long term:
  — interact equally with female and male students.

  — give students of both genders equal amounts of attention, praise and encouragement.

  — ensure that both genders participate equally in activities in the various subject areas.

  — ensure that both male and female students are rewarded and reprimanded in a similar manner.

School Environment

School environment refers both to the school's physical environment and to the intangible "culture," "climate" or "ethos" which gives each school (and school system) its unique character.

The school is a mini-society. Like all other societies, it has written rules, regulations and policies that students and staff are expected to observe. It also has unspoken rules, values and expectations that its citizens (in this case, students and staff) learn through the socialization process. When respect for all students and staff, and a strong belief that both genders have equal ability and potential permeate a school, the result will be an environment in which all students are treated with dignity and encouraged to develop in whatever direction their interests and abilities take them.

Teachers, administrators and support staff are part of the school environment. Ensuring that students see female and male employees in a variety of traditional and non-traditional jobs and roles is one way of broadening their horizons.

Policy

Saskatchewan Education endeavors to create a gender-equitable environment at all levels of the Department. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to ensure that school environments are gender-equitable and that students and school staff of both genders are given a wide range of opportunities and treated with the same dignity and respect.

Saskatchewan Education	School Division	School
	• Establish policy which clearly states the school division's expectation that male and female students will have equal access to all courses and programs.	• Ensure that visual displays in hallways and classrooms are free of gender bias. • Assign students to groups or activities using criteria other than gender. • Schedule classes such as industrial arts and home economics so that students can take both, if desired.
• Continue implementation of Saskatchewan Education's Employment Fairness Plan.	• Provide opportunities for female and male employees to develop leadership potential and to assume leadership roles.	• Assign employees' responsibilities on the basis of training, competencies and interest, not gender.
	• Consider both men and women for all job openings.	• Structure the school environment so that students see peers, teachers and support staff of both genders in a variety of traditional and non-traditional roles (e.g., school spirit squad instead of cheerleaders, male and female administrators, kindergarten teachers, caretakers, and clerical staff).
• Identify resources which provide advice on gender-equitable school environments.	• Provide inservice on a gender-equitable school environment as part of the staff development program.	• Encourage a balance of females and males in those courses that traditionally attract a disproportionate number of either gender.

Saskatchewan Education	School Division	School
	• Develop a policy based on the belief that female and male students should have equal opportunities in extra-curricular activities.	• Provide equitable commitment to involvement of males and females in sports including comparable allocation of: -money -equipment -facilities -staff time.
		• Ensure that female and male students and teachers have equal opportunities and recognition in extra-curricular activities. • Ensure that school assemblies, plays and special days are gender-equitable and that over the long term both genders have equal opportunity to participate.
		• Structure field trips so that students see males and females in both traditional and non-traditional roles.
	• Establish a policy which makes clear the school division's expectation that all interactions between people in the school environment will be gender-equitable.	• Foster respect and consideration in all interactions between individuals at school through example and expectation.
• Inform school divisions of sources from which information about the development of sexual harassment policies may be obtained.	• Develop a policy which defines sexual harassment, sets out procedures which are to be followed and which reflects the requirements of sections 13 and 16 of the *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*.	• Make teachers and students aware of the sexual harassment policy. • Provide inservice to teachers on the topic of sexual harassment. • Follow procedures outlined in the sexual harassment policy.
• Identify sources of information on policies and programs which address child sexual abuse.	• Develop a policy which addresses child sexual abuse and reflects the requirements of *The Child and Family Services Act* and the *Child Abuse Protocol - School System*. • Provide inservice on awareness, recognition and prevention of sexual abuse as part of the staff development program.	• Make teachers aware of the sexual abuse policy. • Ensure that children are being taught sexual abuse prevention programs.

Student Development

Student development is a comprehensive, educational process responsible for assisting students to develop:

- a positive self-concept
- effective human relationships
- awareness and understanding of career choices
- responsible membership in society
- problem-solving and decision-making competencies and processes
- the ability to grow with change
- a positive lifestyle

Career education is one aspect of student development. This aspect of the program is about options—specifically making students aware of the career options open to them so that they can select high school courses and set future goals that truly reflect their interests and abilities. When students believe that all school courses and all careers are open to them, their options are greatly increased. They have greater opportunity to select a career path that will give them satisfaction and are better equipped to make choices in the rapidly changing world of work.

Other aspects of student development relate to personal growth and to functioning effectively in the home, the family and the community. The program should be structured so that self-confidence and the ability to relate well to others are not perceived to be exclusive to one gender or the other. Similarly, both genders need instruction in decision-making and realistic opportunities to practice this skill. In the contemporary world, both women and men are regularly required to make decisions which have long-term significance. Both genders also need to be able to cope with change in order to live now and in the century ahead.

Policy

Saskatchewan Education shall provide leadership to schools and school divisions in the development of gender-equitable student development programs. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to ensure that student development programs (including career education programs) provide both genders with the knowledge, skills and values they need to live successfully in the years ahead.

Saskatchewan Education	School Division	School
• Provide schools with information about the changing nature of the job market.		• Provide both genders with realistic information about future life. Both genders will probably be employed and have responsibilities in the home. • Ensure that there is balanced representation of men and women in both traditional and non-traditional occupations during career days. • Encourage both female and male students to take school courses and enter career paths which reflect their individual interests and abilities, not only those traditional for their gender.
• Identify and develop gender-equitable counselling materials.		• Use instructional materials which are based on the assumption that all careers are available to both genders.

Saskatchewan Education	School Division	School
• Base student development curricula on the assumption that maximum personal and social growth is desirable for both genders.	• Develop a policy recognizing that maximum personal and social growth is a desirable objective for both genders.	• Endeavor to promote maximum personal and social growth for both genders in student development instruction.
• Include strategies for assertiveness training, self-esteem enhancement and assisting students with self-discipline in student development curricula.	• Provide inservice for teachers, administrators and counsellors on gender equity in student development that includes: - career counselling - assertiveness training - self-esteem enhancement - assisting students with self-discipline.	• Offer assertiveness training, self-esteem enhancement and assistance with self-discipline to students of both genders.
	• Ensure that the delivery of support services such as information dissemination, counselling, consultation, community liaison, inservice and assessment occur in a gender-equitable manner.	• Ensure that the delivery of support services such as information dissemination, counselling, consultation, community liaison, inservice and assessment occur in a gender-equitable manner.

The School and the Community

The school interacts with parents, the media and the general public.

When the educational system ensures that all of these interactions are gender-equitable, its commitment to the goals of gender equity is clear. It also provides leadership for others in the community.

Involving members of the community in planning and implementing the gender equity program is a good way to disseminate information about the program and to build support for it. Moreover, the active support of community members can be a very positive influence on children and adolescents.

Policy

Saskatchewan Education shall ensure that its interactions with parents, the media and the general public are gender-equitable. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to ensure that contacts with their communities are gender-equitable and to involve their communities in planning for gender equity.

Saskatchewan Education	School Division	School
• Ensure that media releases and publications issued by all divisions of Saskatchewan Education use inclusionary language.	• Ensure that all correspondence, media releases and publications issued by the division use inclusionary language.	• Ensure that all communications between the school and the home and/or community use inclusionary language.
• Ensure that pictorial representations in all Saskatchewan Education publications are gender-balanced.	• Involve the community in the establishment of the gender equity program.	• Involve parents and the public in promotion of the gender equity program.
	• Create opportunities to develop, describe and promote the gender equity program with parents, community and business leaders.	• Expose students participating in work experience programs to both traditional and non-traditional careers and role models.
		• Encourage involvement of community members of both genders in school volunteer activities.
	• Establish guidelines so that community involvement in the school program reflects the principles of gender equity.	• Ensure that involvement of community members in school programs reflects the principles of gender equity.

Monitoring

Monitoring refers to the education system's ability to determine the extent to which progress has been made toward achieving gender equity.

It is the process of establishing goals and periodically assessing the progress made toward achieving those goals. It includes the development of procedures and mechanisms which can be used to measure progress. Another part of monitoring is re-evaluation of goals. As social and economic change occurs and as technology progresses, it is useful to regularly examine goals and assess their continued appropriateness.

Policy

Saskatchewan Education shall monitor its own progress toward gender equity goals and provide leadership and assistance to schools and school divisions in the monitoring of progress toward their goals. Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to develop systematic assessment processes to determine whether gender equity goals have been met.

Saskatchewan Education	School Division	School
• Continued evaluation of Saskatchewan Education's Employment Fairness Plan.		
• Develop an assessment process to determine the extent to which Saskatchewan Education's gender equity goals and objectives have been met.	• Develop an assessment process to determine the extent to which division goals and objectives have been met.	• Develop an assessment process to determine the extent to which school goals and objectives have been met.
• Incorporate gender equity into the ongoing program evaluation process.	• Incorporate gender equity into the ongoing program evaluation process.	• Incorporate gender equity into the ongoing program evaluation process.
• Assist school divisions and schools to develop or identify assessment measures to determine the extent to which gender equity goals have been met.		
• Assist school divisions and schools with the monitoring process by maintaining, analyzing and providing statistical records concerning numbers of male and female students in various courses and numbers of female and male teachers at each grade level and subject area.		

Interorganizational Cooperation

Directions, (1984) the final report of the Curriculum and Instruction Review Committee, recognized that effective change requires the collaboration of all of the partners in education. Thus, gender equity can be best achieved through a cooperative effort between Saskatchewan Education; the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association; the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents; and the province's teacher training institutions. Teacher education programs have a special role to play in the achieving of gender equity because the school system of tomorrow is heavily influenced by what the education students of today learn.

Each educational organization can show its commitment to the principles of gender equity by actively working to implement those elements of this policy which fall under its jurisdiction. Each can identify ways of working with other organizations and creating linkages so that implementation of gender equity becomes a coordinated, cooperative effort. Such an effort will contribute greatly to schools in which children of both genders achieve maximum intellectual, social and personal growth.

Outlined below are some suggestions for achieving gender equity which can be undertaken by each of the partners in education.

Saskatchewan Education

- Assume a leadership role in achieving gender equity.
- Cooperate with the other partners in education in achieving gender equity.
- Undertake the activities outlined in the column labelled Saskatchewan Education in this policy document.
- Endeavor to make all interactions between Saskatchewan Education and the educational community gender-equitable.
- Continue the existing Employment Fairness Plan.

Saskatchewan School Trustees Association (SSTA)

SSTA

- Provide leadership to school boards in achieving gender equity.
- Promote research on issues related to gender equity in education.

Boards

- Provide leadership to schools in achieving gender equity.
- Undertake the activities outlined in the School Division column of this policy document.
- Endeavor to make all interactions between the school board and administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community gender-equitable.

League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS)

LEADS

- Provide leadership to administrators in achieving gender equity.

Directors and Superintendents

- Work with school boards, principals and teachers in achieving gender equity.
- Endeavor to make all interactions between directors and boards, principals, teachers, students, parents and the community gender-equitable.
- Participate in inservice and other programs related to gender equity.
- Undertake the activities outlined in the School Division and School columns of this policy document.

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF)

STF

- Provide leadership to teachers in achieving gender equity.
- Acquire materials and provide inservice as appropriate to achieve this goal.

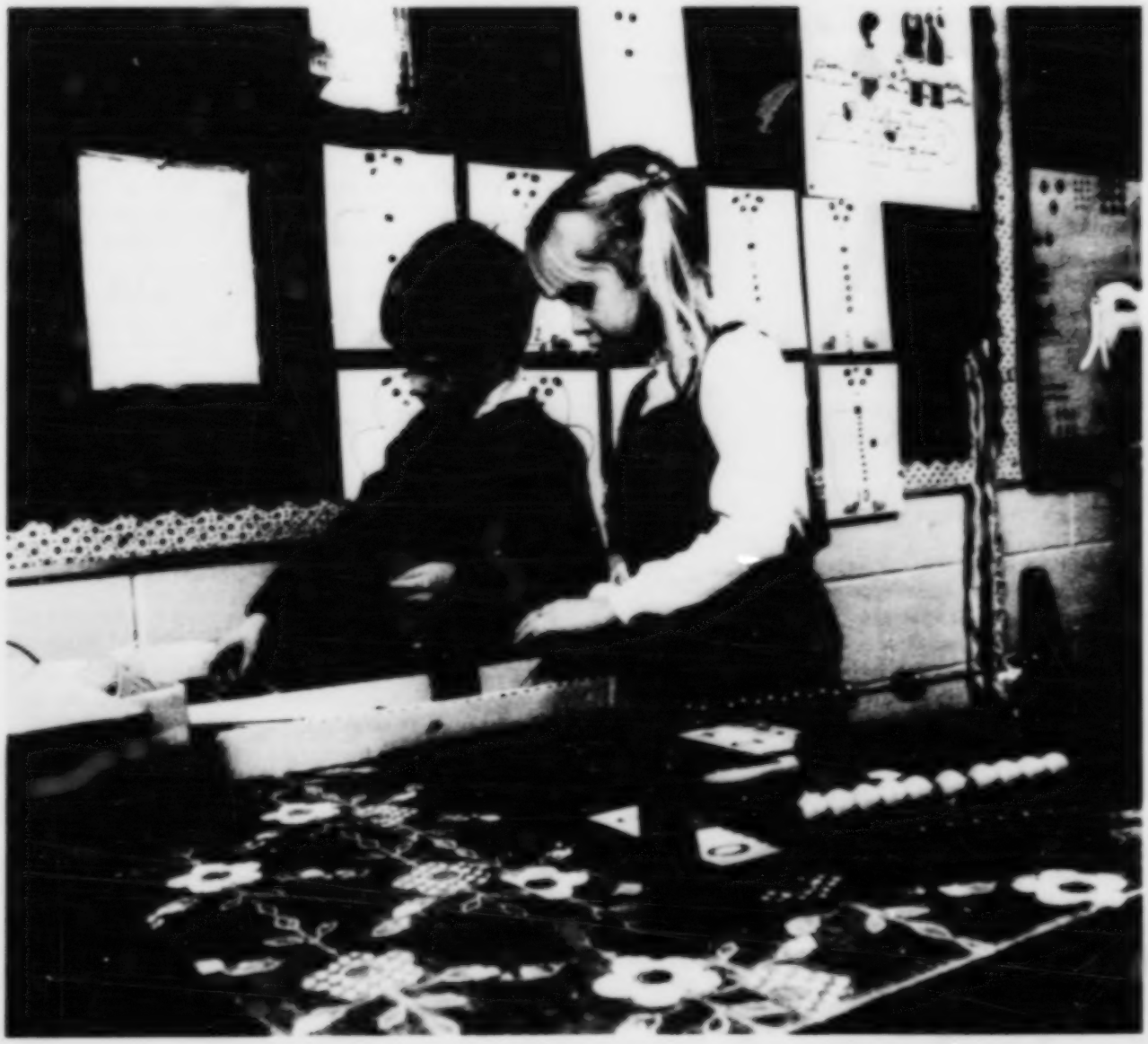
Teachers

- Endeavor to make all interactions between teachers and students, other teachers, parents and the community gender-equitable.
- Participate in inservice and other programs related to gender equity.
- Undertake the activities outlined in the School column of this policy document.

Teacher Education Programs (University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, SUNTEP, NORTEP, ITEP, INEP)

- Ensure that issues related to gender equity are addressed in all teacher-education classes.

- Endeavor to make all interactions with students, faculty and staff gender-equitable.
- Encourage and facilitate the enrollment of both male and female students in programs which are non-traditional for their genders.
- Promote research on issues related to gender equity in education.
- Ensure that beginning teachers are equipped to implement the activities identified in the School column of this policy document.



Conclusion

Gender inequality is a problem embedded in the fabric of Canada's social structure. Change will require action by many segments of society.

The educational system, by making a commitment to gender equity and by taking concrete steps to create gender-equitable schools, is helping reduce this serious problem and is providing the leadership needed if broader change is to occur.

Gender equity is an achievable and a necessary goal for the schools of Saskatchewan. Reaching this goal will require a coordinated, cooperative effort by all of the partners in education. It will mean looking at specific components of the educational system: curriculum, instructional and assessment practices, resource materials, school environment, student development, relationships between the school and the community, and monitoring. It will mean taking action at the provincial, school division, and school levels.

Achieving gender equity will take commitment, hard work, ingenuity and initiative by many different individuals and organizations. The result—better schools and a better society—will be well worth the effort.

Glossary

Assessment - a preliminary phase in the evaluation process. In this phase, a variety of strategies is used to gather information about student progress.

Employment Fairness Plan - a comprehensive employment strategy to ensure that women, persons of Aboriginal ancestry and persons who have a disability are treated fairly with respect to employment in the Saskatchewan public service.

Evaluation - the weighing of assessment information against some standard (such as the curriculum learning objective) in order to make a judgement.

Gender bias - a situation in which one gender is given greater recognition or opportunity than the other. Also, the absence of girls and women in research, discussions and resources.

Gender-equitable - an adjective describing educational situations or instructional materials which provide equal recognition of or equal opportunities for both females and males.

Gender equity - the provision of equality of opportunity and the realization of equality of results for all students based on individual aptitudes, abilities and interests, regardless of gender.

Gender Equity Program - the deliberate, planned activities undertaken by any school or school division in order to bring about gender equity.

Inclusionary language - language which includes both genders and gives them equal status.

Stereotyped - as used in this policy, this term refers to preconceived views or ideas about what is appropriate behaviour for one gender or the other.

Ways of knowing - the ways in which individuals acquire, organize and interpret information, and interact with and react to their environment. Socialization experiences have an important influence on the ways in which individuals learn and the ways in which they know the world.

Appendix A - The Research

A large body of research around the issue of gender equity exists. Researchers have studied in depth both the culture of the school and the ways that teachers and students interact on a one-to-one level. Research findings indicate that there is a need for change in many areas of the educational system.

Three generalizations which can be made about the gender equity research are:

1. It shows clearly that teachers and the larger educational system treat male and female students differently.
2. It does not equally explore the effects of this differential treatment on both genders. Most of the research focuses on the effects on females; there is little which considers the effects on males.
3. The majority of the research comes from the United States. The number of Canadian studies which have been conducted is limited.

Some conclusions which can be drawn from this body of research include:

- Instructional Materials
  - In recent years, publishers have made efforts to make educational materials more gender-equitable—to portray both genders in a wide variety of roles and to use inclusionary language. However, many stereotyped materials are still on the market.
  - Inclusionary language is important. Both children and adults interpret words such as "man-made" or "mankind" to mean men, not people in general.
  - Children's attitudes toward female and male roles are influenced by the materials they read and view.

- Gender Grouping
  - Grouping students by gender for academic and other activities limits the experiences of both genders.
  - Males and females are often assigned different classroom tasks reflecting stereotypical views of the roles of the genders.
  - In many parts of Canada, some high school subjects feature greater enrolment of one gender than the other, male enrolment in the maths and sciences and in industrial arts, females in home economics.
  - In Saskatchewan gender grouping does not occur in high school maths and sciences. Overall female enrolment and marks in these subjects are equivalent to male.
  - Presently educational patterns are such that males obtain more experience and knowledge of computers than females.
  - Some post-secondary programs such as medicine and veterinary medicine have become more gender-equitable in recent years, but the enrollment in most programs still reflects traditional patterns of gender grouping.

- Discipline
  - Males are disciplined more frequently and more harshly by teachers than are females even when both genders misbehave in identical ways.
  - Some teachers have different expectations concerning behaviour for females than they do for males.

- Teacher Attention
  - Males receive more attention of all types from teachers than do females during classroom instruction.
  - Males receive more encouragement to use higher level questioning and reasoning than do females.
  - Females receive more encouragement to be quiet and passive than do males.

- Evaluation
  - Written achievement tests may have a male bias in that the item content may reflect the experiences and interests of males to a greater extent than it reflects the experiences and interests of females.
  - Teachers sometimes use different criteria for evaluating the academic performance of female and male students.

A lengthy bibliography appears at the end of this policy. The conclusions which appear above are based on the studies and reports cited in the bibliography.

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